

Essays and Contributions.

CHURCH LITERATURE.

I. D. BOWMAN.

The large majority of readers of the *EVANGELIST* take a greater interest in the church news department than any other. Hence a thorough effort should be made to get all the news possible along this line. All are anxious to hear of the salvation of souls. But as this part of the paper, I presume, is well managed, I will state what I believe should be given special attention for the advancement of God's cause.

a. How to be able to understand the scriptures. A scientific rule of interpretation.

b. Are we compelled to use the same rules of interpretation for the Bible.

c. When, to what extent and under what circumstances, are we permitted to violate common rules of interpretation.

This subject is very essential, for if men at their own discretion can literalize and spiritualize Scripture without some fixed laws or rules to govern them, it would be impossible to prove or disprove anything with any degree of certainty. Hence the Bible could not be a revelation to man. Our people should be so instructed in rules of interpretation to be enabled to arrive at positive truth for themselves. Nearly all error is caused by the violation of the plain rules of interpretation.

2. Bible alone church government.

a. Who legislate?

b. Who judge?

c. Who execute?

This subject should be clearly and thoroughly set forth; every part should be proven by Gospel references, so that every minister and lay member can see readily the beauty, superiority, and perfection of Gospel alone government. Also, so that every person can see how each congregation and member can be governed by it.

3. First principles and ordinances of the Gospel.

a. Clear proof from.

b. Spiritual design.

I want to emphasize the importance of presenting clear Bible proof for trine

immersion, because it is nearly always viewed from a historical standpoint. I do not desire to be understood to undervalue history, but Bible arguments have been too much neglected.

With equal emphasis I insist upon a clear lucidation of the spiritual design of all the ordinances. As a general rule far too many of the Brethren have disgraced the cause of Christ by obeying the form without the spirit; hence they prove a curse instead of a blessing.

4. A thoroughly consecrated ministry.

Perhaps above all else we need red hot articles upon this subject. If possible, they should be written by men who practice what they preach.

Envy, jealousy, hatred, quick temper, covetousness and all other wickedness should be expunged. Such men should never be elected to the ministry; but as all churches have such ungodly men, churches should refuse to employ them, even if they should have giant minds. Better have a one talented man that is thoroughly converted than a five talented man that is unconverted. Faith, humanity, steadfastness, openness to conviction and love are essential qualifications that should be dwelt upon.

5. Prophecy.

a. Is the church commanded to study prophecy?

b. Is the church justifiable in neglecting this subject?

c. What is to be gained by its study?

d. What is the curse of neglect? Clear Bible answers should be given to each of these questions as well as many others phases of these subjects.

There are a few of the subjects that I feel need special attention, also others perhaps equally important: viz.—missions, education, giving, etc.

819 W. Cumberland St., Phil., Pa.

God never gives much of his truth to those who are not willing to live it.

The Sabbath is not rightly observed in the home where the children hate to see Sunday come.

The whole counsel of God is not being declared from the pulpit where the most notorious sinner in town can be a member of that church for years and be respected.

CHURCH LITERATURE.

BY JACOB C. CASSEL.

Your card inviting me to contribute an article on the subject of an "ideal literature for the Brethren church" is at hand, it puts me into about the same predicament that Henry M. Stanley was in when one of the Semi-Savage King's of Africa asked Mr. Stanley to make him a Christian. Mr. Stanley did not have a very exalted opinion of his orthodoxy and was therefore at a loss to know how to comply with the request of the King. My knowledge of literature from a literary point of view is very limited, hence I cannot discuss the subject from that standpoint, but I may possibly be able to make a few suggestions as to what themes, or subjects should be embraced in our literature and in what form or manner we can reach the greatest possible number of readers of that which we do publish.

We should have a treatise on church government as set forth in the scripture something like the Anderson lectures published in the *EVANGELIST* over a year ago. We should have a compiled work of the writings of the early church "fathers;" very few people in ordinary circumstances have access to what is called the Anti-Nicene library; a compact compiled work would answer every purpose and could be published at a comparatively small cost.

We should have an abridged work on church history in general, and an exhaustive work on our own church history in particular from its inception by Mack down to the present day. We should have a critical work on the doctrines of the Brethren church, and a book on the subject of obedience citing the many disastrous results of disobedience noted in the Bible. We should have a very complete collection of hymns sufficiently diversified to be suitable for baptism, Lords supper, communion, feet-washing, for funerals of fathers or mothers, of brothers or sisters, of children or aged saints, for dedications, and the regular services of the church. The subjects mentioned do not exhaust the list of what we should have but they are quite suffi-